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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

APRIL 24, 1978

IN THE MARKETPLACE

Overall prices for food rose 6.3 percent in 1977 over 1976. Grocery store prices climbed 6 percent while away-from-home eating prices rose 7.6 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Retail prices for Choice beef averaged \$1.38 per pound for 1977, about the same as 1976. The farm share of the retail price of meats increased in 1977.

Milk prices in retail stores were remarkably stable during 1976 and 1977, varying less than 3 percent during either year. Milk production, however, in 1977 continued to run ahead of 1976, totaling about 3 percent more for the year.

Butter prices increased to \$1.33 per pound in 1977, 7 cents over 1976. This was less than the jump of 23.5 cents in 1976 over 1975. Grade A large eggs at retail in 12 major U.S. cities averaged 80 cents per dozen during 1977, 3 cents less than during 1976.

Retail price increases for many fresh and processed fruits and vegetables were generally larger in 1977 than in 1976. Retail fresh fruit prices increased about 18 percent overall in 1977, and fresh vegetables about 12 percent.

Frying chickens averaged only a one-cent increase in 1977 over 1976, and turkeys (8-16 pounds) were up 5 cents per pound to an average of 79 cents.

COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED

---ON NET WEIGHT PROPOSAL

Consumers and industry will have more time to comment on the U.S. Department of Agriculture proposal to revise the net weight labeling regulations on meat and poultry products. The new deadline is June 2. Additional time had been requested for compiling and analyzing technical data on the economic impact some provisions of the proposals would have on consumers and industry.

The purpose of the proposal was to assure more accurate net weight on meat and poultry products at the time of retail sale. Under the proposal, juices and liquids that drain from some meat and poultry products could no longer be included in the net weight of the packages.

Comments should be submitted in two copies to the Hearing Clerk, USDA, Room 1077, Washington, D.C. 20250.

IMPORTED POULTRY PRODUCTS

Israel is now allowed to export poultry products into the United States under a new amendment to USDA's poultry inspection regulations allowing entry of canned, shelf-stable products made from chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese and guineas from individually-certified Israeli plants. It has been determined by USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service that Israel has a poultry inspection system with standards at least equal to those of the United States. Each certified plant in Israel will be visited several times a year by an FSQS foreign review officer, in addition to the continuous inspection by Israeli officials.

USDA 1055-78

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FOOD CLIPS

Think food safety. Meat and poultry products should be selected last when doing your grocery buying at the supermarket. Ask the clerk to pack them all together so they'll stay cool longer, until you get them home to be stored properly.

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Defrost meat and poultry in the refrigerator when possible. If not, place it in cold water to aid thawing, if the wrapping is watertight, or defrost at room temperature in a tightly-closed double paper bag.

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When handling food, be sure to begin with a clean kitchen, clean hands, and clean equipment. Never place raw meat on a surface without cleaning the surface before and after use.

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Leftovers should be stored in the refrigerator as soon as possible, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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Know what kind of ham you are buying. Some need to be cooked, others are fully cooked and can be eaten as they come from the package. Check the label and read carefully. If you have any doubts, cook thoroughly.

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Did you know that botulism is found more often in home canned foods than in commercial products? Be careful either way. Don't buy food in leaking, bulging, or damaged cans, cracked jars or jars with loose or bulging lids.

FISH FARMING

Attracting new interest today in the United States and around the world is the form of aquaculture known as "fish farming." Trout hatcheries and farms in the United States go back more than 100 years, and about 20 years ago some interest developed in warm water fish culture, which included the buffalo fish and the catfish.

One reason for growing interest in fish farming is the world demand for fish, expected to double by the year 2000, according to the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Fish farms can be--and often are--developed on land that is poorly-suited for crops. Fish farming is more energy-efficient than other types of animal protein production. In this country, fish farming is usually limited to trout and catfish. Commercial catfish farms reached a high of about 60,000 acres in 1974.

ABOUT	<u>Liz Rittersporn</u> , former assistant women's editor at the New York <u>News</u> , is new editor of the Sunday supplement <u>NOW</u> , the life-style section of the <u>News</u> .
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ME	She was with <u>Mademoiselle</u> magazine before joining the <u>News</u> in 1973..The XI International Congress of Nutrition will hold its scientific program in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Aug. 27-Sept. 1, with sessions on mass feeding and consumer protection, as well as food and nutrition education..... <u>Camille Stagg</u> , new food editor at <u>Sphere</u> magazine, formerly was with the Chicago (Ill.) <u>Sun-Times</u> .. The Boys Clubs of America have received a grant from a food company for work in low-income areas on nutrition education.